

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND RECORD OF DECISION FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW AVIARY AT THE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTER FLORIDA FIELD STATION

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) plans to authorize construction of a new aviary on the grounds of the Florida Field Station (FFS), Gainesville, FL. The facility is being built by the University of Florida (UF) and will initially be used for a 5 year study of the impacts of mercury on white ibis. At the conclusion of the 5 year study, the facility, without the ibis, will be turned over to the NWRC for use in research on methods to reduce conflicts between birds and humans.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzed the following alternatives:

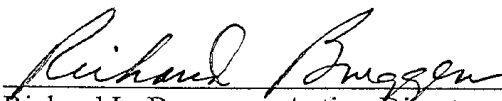
- Alternative 1: Permit the construction of a new aviary at the FFS (Proposed Action).
Alternative 2: Do not permit the construction of a new aviary (No Action).

NWRC has selected the proposed action (Alternative 1) as the best alternative to meet the current and future research needs of the UF and the NWRC. NWRC has determined that the proposed alternative would have no significant impact on the environment, therefore, the preparation of and Environmental Impact Statement will not be required. This determination is based on evaluation of the following factors:

1. The proposed activities would involve approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre on the NWRC Gainesville Field Station property in Alachua County, FL. The proposed action is not regional or national in scope.
2. The proposed action would pose minimal risk to public health and safety. All waste will be properly disposed of via municipal sewer and sanitation systems. Construction of the aviary will only result in a temporary, minor increase in traffic on the main access road that will last only for the duration of construction.
3. There are no unique characteristics such as park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic areas, or ecologically critical areas that would be significantly affected.
4. The effects on the human environment are not highly controversial.
5. The effects of the proposed activities are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks.

6. The proposed action would not establish a precedent for any future action with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Future research by the NWRC that would have impacts outside the parameters assessed in the EA would be subject to additional analysis as directed by the National Environmental Policy Act.
7. No significant cumulative effects on the human environment were identified through this assessment.
8. The proposed activities would not affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Historic Register of Historic Places, nor would they likely cause any loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. The Florida State Historic Preservation Office has concurred that the impacts associated with construction of the aviary would not result in changes in the character or use of historic properties.
9. The proposed activities will fully comply with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The proposed activities would have no effect on Federally listed threatened or endangered species. NWRC has determined that there are no Federally listed species using habitat at the FFS.
10. The relatively small area of land (3/4 acre) occupied by the aviary will not be available for other uses. There are no other irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources identified by this assessment except for minor consumption of fossil fuels and electrical energy for routine operations.
11. The proposed action would be in compliance with all Federal, State, and local laws imposed for the protection of the environment

For additional information regarding this decision, please contact Michael L. Avery, USDA, APHIS, WS, NWRC, Florida Field Station, 2820 East University Ave., Gainesville, FL 32641.


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6/14/04
Date